The only awarding body
run *by* counsellors
for counsellors

2023-2024

Specification
Level 4 Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling (TC-L4)

This RQF qualification is regulated by Ofqual in England, Qualifications Wales in Wales and CCEA in Northern Ireland.

Qualification/learning aim number: 500/8088/X

Sector endorsement: Skills for Health

Sector subject area: 1.3 Health and Social Care

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Please note:

This document, along with candidate support materials, can be downloaded from the CPCAB website. If you need help with the accessibility of this document, please email contact@cpcab.co.uk with your request.

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1.Qualification Information

Purpose Statement	This two-year part-time qualification gives learners the knowledge, skills and competencies to work as a therapeutic counsellor in an agency context in both health care and non-medical settings. Successful completion of this course means that the candidates will be able to provide a therapeutic counselling service - initially within the context of an agency's service framework but later (with experience and support from the supervisor, or by completing PC-L5 or its equivalent) they may progress to independent practice. Potential job roles include but are not limited to: • A counsellor employed by a college • A counsellor working in the third sector • A counsellor employed by a charity • A Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner in the NHS Talking Therapies services • An 'adult' counsellor in independent practice (with additional training and support) Please see below for progression opportunities.
Funding	The qualification is eligible in England for Advanced Learner Loans (19+) The link to the government website which provides details of funding for this qualification can be found here: ESFA: funding rules, rates and formula
Qualification structure	**7 mandatory units:** Unit 1 - Working ethically, safely and professionally as a counsellor Unit 2 - Working within a counselling relationship Unit 3 - Working with client diversity in counselling work Unit 4 - Working within a user-centred approach to counselling Unit 5 - Working with self-awareness in the counselling process Unit 6 - Working within a coherent framework of counselling theory and skills Unit 7 - Working self-reflectively as a counsellor
Level	4[1]

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[1]   Equivalent to European Qualification Framework (EQF) level 5 and Scottish Credit Qualification Framework (SCQF) level 7.

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Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	420 (minimum)
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	1204
Credit value	120
Minimum Age	19 years[2]. Please see <u>CPCAB Candidate Entry Requirements</u> .
Entry Requirements	CPCAB Level 2 Certificate in Counselling Skills (CSK-L2) and CPCAB Level 3 Certificate in Counselling Studies (CST-L3), or their Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) equivalent[3.]. Please see: • <u>CPCAB Candidate Entry Requirements</u> for criteria considered important in selecting applicants for a programme leading to TC-L4. • CPCAB's <u>RPL Guidance.</u>
Assessment	Proficient (Pass)/Not Proficient (Fail) Candidates must be Proficient in both internal and external assessment and meet all the qualification requirements, including all placement hours, to achieve the qualification. **Internal assessment:** tutor assessment of candidate portfolio evidencing minimum assessment requirements and verified by CPCAB. See CPCAB's <u>Minimum Assessment Requirements.</u> **External assessment:** externally assessed case review (3,000-3,500 words).

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[2]   This age requirement is linked to Ofqual's system for categorising qualifications.
[3]   Tutors can allow entry to the first year of TC-L4 to candidates who have not yet completed their assessment for CST-L3. However, such candidates must successfully complete CST-L3 prior to entry into the 2nd year of TC-L4.

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Additional Qualification Requirements	**Personal counselling** – a minimum of 10 hours face to face personal therapy during the course (to accommodate a range of theoretical approaches), **but** centre requirements must be consistent with the counselling model being offered - in practice this is usually more than 10 hours.
	Client work – a minimum of 100 hours **formally-contracted** counselling (one-to-one) with at least 5 different clients in an agency setting. Cancellations and non-attends do <u>not</u> count towards this total.
	Clinical Supervision – Candidates require clinical supervision for their agency client work.[4] In addition, candidates require 30-50 hours group training supervision as part of the course.
Staffing and Resources	At least **two** tutors must be involved in all aspects of internal candidate assessment.
	See <u>Tutor-Assessor Qualifications and Experience</u> for further details of CPCAB requirements.
Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)	Centres are required to have robust IQA (internal moderation and verification) processes that are verified by CPCAB.
	See <u>Guide to Internal Moderation and Verification for Centres.</u>
Progression	• Level 5 Diploma in Psychotherapeutic Counselling (PC-L5) • Level 5 Diploma in Cognitive Behavioural Therapeutic Skills & Theory (CBT-L5) • Level 5 Diploma in Counselling Children and Young People (CYP-L5) • Level 6 Certificate in Therapeutic Counselling Supervision (TCSU-L6)[5] • Open University Foundation Degree in Counselling[6] See <u>CPCAB's Progression Route</u> for details.
Candidate Registration Fee	£359 Year 1 £359 Year 2
	Candidates **need to be** registered for each separate year of the qualification.

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[4]   CPCAB recommends that the candidate's agency provides appropriate clinical supervision to meet the requirements of their chosen ethical framework or professional membership association. For example, <u>BACP Supervision Guidelines</u> for trainees require a minimum of 1½ hours individual supervision per month (or the equivalent if in group supervision) or 1 hour of supervision for every 8 hours of client work.

[5]   To progress from TC-L4 to TCSU-L6, candidates must have substantial practitioner experience; the recommended amount is 450 hours.

[6]   To access the OU Foundation Degree candidates must have completed the CPCAB Level 4 Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling (TC-L4). CPCAB level 5 qualifications contribute 30 credits towards the achievement of the Foundation Degree. For further details see <u>CPCAB Website.</u>

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Centre Application for CPCAB Approval to Offer the Qualification	Centre application fee: £386 (one-off fee).[7] Centres are expected to design their own training programmes.[8] Sample schemes of work are available from CPCAB on request.
Online Delivery Options	This qualification is eligible for fully in-person, or blended delivery. Up to 25% of the GLH of this qualification can be delivered online. Please see how to run CPCAB's qualifications online for more information.

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[7] In order for your application to be processed the application fee will need to accompany your application. This is non-refundable. Payment can be made by cheque payable to CPCAB or via Bacs payment. Please contact finance@cpcab.co.uk for more information.

[8] All centre designed courses must be approved by CPCAB before candidates can be registered. Although the delivery of courses may differ from centre to centre, all delivery must enable the candidates to achieve the learning outcomes of the qualification.

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2. Qualification Summary
Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria (TC-L4)

Learning outcomes *(skills, knowledge, understanding)* The learner will/will be able to:	Assessment criteria *(to assess learning outcome)* The learner can:
Unit 1	**Working ethically, safely and professionally as a counsellor**
1. Work within an ethical and legal framework	1.1 Work within an ethical framework for counselling. 1.2 Demonstrate professional standards of conduct. 1.3 Be able to maintain confidentiality in counselling work. 1.4 Comply with relevant legal requirements for counselling. 1.5 Explain the issues relating to the duty of care with regard to the legislation on safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.
2. Work within a counselling service organisation	2.1 Work within the ethical, legal and procedural framework in which a given agency operates. 2.2 Use teamwork skills to work with others. 2.3 Use professional skills to work with others. 2.4 Use client assessment to inform the counselling work
3. Use supervision to work within own limits of proficiency	3.1 Monitor limits of proficiency and fitness to practise. 3.2 Make suicidal risk assessments and work with emergency situations. 3.3 Support referral where appropriate. 3.4 Monitor own effectiveness and identify issues that require personal work.

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Unit 2	Working within a counselling relationship
1. Establish and sustain the boundaries of the counselling relationship	1.1 Explore the role of the counsellor in different settings and services.
	1.2 Establish the boundaries of the counselling relationship within specific agency settings.
	1.3 Sustain the boundaries of the counsellor role.
	1.4 Manage breaks and endings appropriately.
2. Establish and develop the therapeutic relationship	2.1 Explain the nature and significance of the therapeutic relationship.
	2.2 Establish and develop the therapeutic relationship.
	2.3 Reflect on the nature and quality of the therapeutic relationship throughout the counselling work.
	2.4 Use the therapeutic relationship to inform and enhance the therapeutic process.
	2.5 Recognise and respond to difficulties and conflicts in the therapeutic relationship.
Unit 3	Working with client diversity in counselling work
1. Understand and work with diversity	1.1 Explore diversity issues between self and client during the counselling relationship.
	1.2 Evaluate how an understanding of diversity can enhance empathy.
	1.3 Demonstrate sensitivity to diversity issues with individual clients.
2. Challenge own issues, fears and prejudices	2.1 Explore and challenge own beliefs and values.
	2.2 Explore and challenge own issues, fears and prejudices concerning working with client diversity.
3. Understand how diversity issues affect client access to counselling	3.1 Reflect on diversity issues which impact on clients accessing counselling within agency settings.
	3.2 Reflect on issues relating to working with a third-party present.

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Unit 4	Working within a user-centred approach to counselling
1. Work within a user-centred agreement for the counselling work	1.1 Enable clients to explore their attitudes to and expectations of counselling within specific agency settings. 1.2 Negotiate a shared agreement for the counselling work. 1.3 Regularly review the working agreement with clients. 1.4 Reflect on the different ways of offering counselling
2. Maintain a user-centred focus throughout the counselling work	2.1 Enable the client to identify, prioritise and focus on their agenda. 2.2 Use regular reviews and clinical supervision to maintain the focus on the client's agenda throughout the counselling work. 2.3 Enable clients to explore their unspoken agendas.
Unit 5	**Working with self-awareness in the counselling process**
1. Use counselling theory to understand own self	1.1 Explore the nature and structure of own self. 1.2 Explore own recent and formative personal history. 1.3 Explore own patterns of relating.
2. Work on personal issues that resonate with client work	2.1 Work on own emotional difficulties and internal conflicts that could impact on client work. 2.2 Work on own recent and past life events that could impact on client work. 2.3 Work on own relationship difficulties that could impact on client work.
3. Use self-awareness to enhance counselling work	3.1 Reflect on the importance of self-awareness in counselling work. 3.2 Use awareness of self during counselling sessions to enhance the therapeutic process. 3.3 Use clinical supervision to develop awareness of own implicit processes.

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Unit 6	Working within a coherent framework of counselling theory and skills
1. Use a coherent framework of theory and skills to inform and enhance counselling work	1.1 Use theory of the self, personal history and relationships in client work. 1.2 Use theory of therapeutic change to inform client work. 1.3 Use research findings to enhance understanding of client work. 1.4 Use counselling skills and techniques associated with own theoretical approach.
2. Understand and work with client problems at different service levels	2.1 Understand and work with common life problems and obstacles to well-being. 2.2 Understand and work with common mental health problems. 2.3 Use clinical supervision to identify clients with severe mental health problems and support the referral process. 2.4 Reflect on different approaches to understanding mental health.
Unit 7	Working self-reflectively as a counsellor
1. Manage own development as a counsellor	1.1 Evaluate own progress, identify needs and plan learning. 1.2 Assist other counselling trainees to identify their progress and learning needs.
2. Reflect on and evaluate own counselling work within agency settings	2.1 Reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of own counselling work in agency settings. 2.2 Prepare for and use clinical supervision effectively. 2.3 Investigate the use of evaluative tools in counselling work.

See the TC-L4 Tutor Guide for candidate guidance to criteria and notes for tutors.

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3. Minimum Assessment Requirements

To achieve the qualification, candidates must be internally assessed as **Proficient** in all 7 units of the qualification and must be **externally** assessed (by CPCAB) as **Proficient**.

Candidates must give **two** pieces of evidence for each criterion. In addition, the Candidate Learning Record (CLR), when complete, must include references to all three assessment methods (documents, tutor observation and testimony) for **each** of the 7 units.

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT – must include all three methods of assessment		
Course activities	**Assessment method [9]**	**Types of evidence** (2 references for each assessment criterion)

• Agency work experience
• Professional discussion and workshops
• Seminars, personal development workshops and group work
• Projects and presentations
• Review of understanding, skills and client work
• Review of learning
• Tutorials
	Documents	• Learning review [10]
		• 2 self-reviews [11]
		• 2 case studies [12]
		• 2 assignments:
		  a) On the service level framework (client-need and outcomes)
		  b) On the theoretical framework (application of understanding to self and client work)
		• Client record: 100+ hrs (one-to-one) min 5 different clients
		• Clinical supervision record [13]
		• Therapy record: 10+ hours [14]
		• Tutorial records (when written by the candidate)

• Assessed counselling practice • Assessed case presentations • Assessed workplace simulation • Group work • Tutorials • Group Training Supervision	**Tutor observation**	• Four tutor-observed counselling practice sessions (2 via audio or video) • 2 case presentations • Workplace simulations • Tutorial records (when written by the tutor)
• Agency work-place experience • Counselling practice • Group work • Case presentations • Group training supervision • Seminars and workshops	**Testimony**	• 1 supervisor report • 1 agency report and/or feedback • Peer feedback

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[9]   Proforma and guide sheets for internal assessment can be downloaded from the CPCAB Website.

[10]   This is an on-going review of learning during the course (also called a "learning journal").

[11]   Self -evaluation of learning, goals, progress, learning needs and completion of the learning tasks (criteria).

[12]   The case study and case presentation may be linked.

[13]   CPCAB recommends that the candidate's agency provides appropriate clinical supervision to meet the requirements of their chosen ethical framework or professional membership association. For example, BACP Supervision Guidelines for trainees require a minimum of 1½ hours individual supervision per month (or the equivalent if in group supervision) or 1 hour of supervision for every 8 hours of client work.

[14]   The therapy requirement should be consistent with the centre's own theoretical model/approach. In practice this means that many centres will require more than the minimum of 10 hours.

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EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT	
Candidates complete a structured case review (3000-3500 words). This is sent to CPCAB for assessment (This is separate from the case study presentation) Please see CPCAB'S TC-L4 External Assessment Guide.	
MARKING SCHEME	
Internal assessment:	Candidates must achieve all the learning outcomes of all seven mandatory units to be assessed as Proficient.
External assessment:	Candidates must achieve at least 1 mark in each section of the case review and an overall mark of 11 out of 21 to be assessed as proficient.

4. Tutor-Assessor Qualifications and Experience

Level 4 Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling (TC-L4)					
	Minimum qualification	Personal therapy + professional association membership	On-going Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	Minimum practice experience	Minimum experience as tutor
Core tutor *two required if teaching separately	420 hours therapeutic counselling qualification at level 4 or above e.g. TC-L4	10 hours of personal therapy And Member of a professional association for counselling or psychotherapy	30 hours per year CPD activities	Current practitioner with 2 years' supervised counselling practice or minimum 450 counselling hours And Supervision qualification or 1 year experience of providing supervision to groups or individuals in a counselling setting	Teaching qualification And 2 years teaching and assessing at level 2 and 3 or above
Additional tutor(s) *relevant if co-tutoring with core tutor	420 hours therapeutic counselling qualification at level 4 or above e.g. TC-L4	10 hours of personal therapy And Member of a professional association for counselling or psychotherapy	30 hours per year CPD activities	Current supervised counselling practice with a minimum of 6 months post-qualifying practice experience.	Teaching qualification or be working towards one And 1 year teaching and assessing at level 2 and 3 or above

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5. Candidate Entry Requirements

This qualification is not suitable for those who are currently in a state of severe emotional difficulty and/or severe psychological distress. Centres need to ensure that all potential candidates are made aware of the nature of the course, and in particular that the course involves experiential elements that will involve some personal disclosure and associated personal developmental activities.

Title	Age	Entry requirements / RPL	Criteria considered important for selecting candidates
TC-L4	19 or over	CSK-L2 and CST-L3[15] or equivalent/RPL	✓ Identify reasons for training beyond just personal development ✓ Provide references ✓ Academically and emotionally able to cope with this level of training ✓ Ability to work with difference and diversity ✓ Possess personal qualities of imagination, intuition, openness and ability to benefit from self-development ✓ Ability to form a therapeutic relationship ✓ Self-awareness, insight, honesty and integrity ✓ Emotional stability and the absence of personality disturbance ✓ Ability to challenge and be challenged ✓ Ability to respond sensitively and empathically to others ✓ Capability to begin working with clients within an agency setting ✓ Are intending (and actively seeking) to begin work with clients during year 1 of the programme

We recommend that tutors carry out a face to face individual interview to ascertain a candidate's suitability for this level of training.

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[15] Tutors can admit candidates to TC-L4 even if they have not yet completed their assessment for CST-L3 provided they achieve this before entry to year 2. Special arrangements can occasionally be made to allow entry of suitably qualified trainees into year 2 of TC-L4 – please contact the CPCAB head office for further guidance.

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6. Fit for Purpose

This qualification has been designed to take account of the latest research findings on what makes counselling effective and is underpinned by the CPCAB model of practitioner development.

The qualification currently offers routes on to the following professional body registers accredited by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA):

- BACP – British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
- NCPS – National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society
- UKCP – United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (Standards for Psychotherapeutic counselling). Learners applying to UKCP must also acquire CPCAB Level 5 diploma in psychotherapeutic counselling.
- COSCA – Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland
- ACC – Association of Christians in Counselling and Linked Professions

The qualification is also mapped to the Counselling and Mental Health National Occupational Standards (NOS), the BACP Core Curriculum and the QAA benchmark standards for counselling and psychotherapy.

The assessment strategy maintains a focus on practitioner skills and qualities as well as on written evidence. The combination of tutor assessment and separate external assessment by CPCAB values both objective independent assessment and the relational knowledge of the candidate and their work. The qualification is reviewed annually to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose.

Centres have to meet robust centre approval requirements before they can deliver this qualification. All tutors are approved and standardised by CPCAB, and centres are visited twice a year by a CPCAB external verifier.

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7. Progression Routes

TC-L4 is part of a suite of CPCAB qualifications. Candidates who have completed this qualification may progress to CPCAB Level 5 Diploma in Psychotherapeutic Counselling (PC-L5) or Level 5 Diploma in Cognitive Behavioural Therapeutic Skills and Theory (CBT-L5), Level 5 Diploma in Counselling Children and Young People (CYP-L5) or the Open University Foundation Degree in Counselling. Following the necessary counselling experience, they can also progress to CPCAB Level 6 Certificate in Therapeutic Counselling Supervision (TCSU-L6).

For details of all CPCAB qualifications please see below or click here: Qualifications - CPCAB for further information.

Level 2 Award in Understanding Substance Misuse (USM-L2)	**Level 2** Award in Introduction to Counselling Skills (ICSK-L2) *Eligible for centre funding*	**Level 2** Award in Effective Listening Skills (ELSK-L2)
	Level 2 Certificate in Counselling Skills (CSK-L2) *Eligible for centre funding*	
	Level 3 Certificate in Counselling Studies (CST-L3) *Eligible for centre funding*	**Level 3** Certificate in Life Coaching Studies (LCS-L3)
Level 4 Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling – BACP Approved Practitioner Qualification (TC-L4)	**Level 4** Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling (TC-L4) *Eligible for centre funding*	**Level 4** Diploma in Life Coaching (LC-L4) *Eligible for centre funding*	Open University Foundation Degree in Counselling
Level 5 Diploma in Psychotherapeutic Counselling (PC-L5) *Eligible for centre funding*	**Level 5** Diploma in Cognitive Behavioural Therapeutic Skills and Theory (CBT-L5) *Eligible for centre funding*	**Level 5** Diploma in Counselling Children and Young People (CYP-L5) *Eligible for centre funding*
Level 6 Certificate in Therapeutic Counselling Supervision (TCSU-L6) *Eligible for centre funding*		

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